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NEWS RELEASE

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Health Information Technology Grants Announced for Rural Communities
2008 Grants Advance the Arizona Health-e Connection Roadmap

The Government Information Technology Agency has distributed \$685,535 to rural health communities under the Rural Health Information Technology Adoption (RHITA) Grant Program. The RHITA grants are part of the implementation efforts of the Arizona Health-e Connection Roadmap developed in response to Governor Janet Napolitano's Executive Order 2005-25.

"These planning grants are an important step in our efforts to modernize the State's health care infrastructure," said Governor Napolitano. "As we continue to implement the Arizona Health-e Connection Roadmap, we will be able to securely exchange patient health information electronically - leading to improved quality and reduced costs of health care statewide."

The RHITA Grant Program focuses on the development of Regional Health Information Organizations (RHIOs) to facilitate health information exchange by Arizona's rural health care providers. RHIOs lead to greater quality and efficiency in health care delivery, enable secure health information exchange among providers, and lower Arizona's health care costs.

"The formation of RHIOs is a critical step in the Arizona Health-e Connection Roadmap implementation efforts," said State CIO Chris Cummiskey. "By focusing the 2008 RHITA Grants on RHIO development, we have maximized the impact of the grants."

The 2008 awardees submitted grant applications on behalf of broad based local community coalitions and demonstrated high levels of partnership, collaboration, and strategic planning for implementation of e-health programs. The following is a list of the lead awardees:

- Benson Hospital - Grant amount: \$103,576.
- Cochise (County) Health Network - Grant amount: \$106,370.
- Marana Health Center - Grant amount: \$173,775.
- Regional Center for Border Health (Somerton) - Grant amount: \$150,000.
- Verde Valley Guidance Center - Grant amount: \$99,052.
- Yuma Regional Medical Center - Grant amount: \$57,762.

In addition to the direct grants, the 2008 RHITA program provided \$298,663 in consulting and educational services to health care organizations in rural communities. These services allowed for the creation of robust RHIO Participation and Formation Guides, raised awareness of the benefits of e-health in rural communities through ten community meetings statewide and will support the grant awardees by guiding them through successful RHIO formation.

To learn more about the RHITA Grant Program and the Arizona Health-e Connection Roadmap, visit www.azgita.gov/ehealth/rhita.